THE WRESTLING FLYER NEWSLETTER

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INTERVIEW
BILL WATTS

The following exclusive interview with Bill Watts was conducted on April 15 by the editor, John Clark, via telephone from his home in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Watts, 52, after a five year hiatus from the wrestling business, returned to become WCW's Executive Vice President of Wrestling Operations in May of 1992 until he resigned on February 10 after about nine months of being in command. During that time, Watts rented out a home in Roswell, Georgia and has since moved back to his home of Tulsa. In this interview, Watts discusses his life in wrestling and his recent experience at WCW. The next issue will feature the second part of the interview where he talks about his many aspects of the business, his resignation from WCW, corporate America, people he has dealt with in wrestling, and his plans for the future. The next issue will also feature a letter that Watts recently sent to TBS' Hank Aaron.

Clark: First, could you please tell me about your education earlier in your life and how you got started in the wrestling business?

Watts: I wrestled in high school and I played football. I was the first all-American high school football player in Putnam City, to the best of my knowledge, and I was in the Jim Thorpe High School Football Hall of Fame here in Oklahoma. I was recruited to Oklahoma University by Bud Wilkinson on a football scholarship, and I wrestled in the off season. Then, I think it must have been my sophomore year, I was in a car-train wreck and I was unconscious for a couple of weeks. I came out of the hospital under 200 pounds, I weighed about 245 normally. Of course, Oklahoma University believed in small and quick at that time, they had Wahoo McDaniel down to 188 pounds. They had me down to 215 or 229 pounds, I was the biggest man on the team. They just didn't realize that kids were starting to grow. I got on weight training after the car wreck, it took me like six months to even be able to get back to where I could do a simple somersault and come up in a hitting position. My ribs were crushed and I had a whole lot of internal injuries. It was amazing that I was alive. But, a friend of mine got me on weight training by accident. You've got to realize, back then weight training was tabooed for athletes because coaches had no knowledge of it. They saw- the typical guy that got into weight training was the timid, non athletic guy that wanted to build up his body. When he did that, he had no natural coordination or no athletic coordination. So the coaches saw this guy build up his body and then they'd watch him be totally uncoordinated, and they would then surmise that the weight training made him uncoordinated. So they said, "Don't lift weights." I had gotten back to my normal body weight of about 245. We started out on weight training and worked really, really hard, and seven months later I weighed 315 pounds. I gained 70 pounds in seven months. I never took a steroid in my life, I was just at the perfect growth age and worked so hard at it. It just transformed me into a superman. So, I was way too big for Oklahoma football, but they wanted me to stay on a wrestling scholarship. But I signed pro with the Houston Oilers in the old American Football League in the second year of the league. Then I got released there, I had an altercation with the head coach. I thought Bud Wilkinson should have had a different philosophy than curse or demean people. Back then a lot of pro football coaches treated you like a slave. In the off season there, I came back home and Jack Brisco was wrestling at Oklahoma State University, Wahoo McDaniel had gotten into pro wrestling, and Dale Louis, a heavyweight at Oklahoma University, had gotten into pro wrestling. And Jack had always been trying to talk me into going into pro wrestling, but the pro wrestling in Oklahoma was junior heavyweight wrestling and very far behind the times. The only athlete that we considered a head was Danny Hodge, he was so head and shoulders above everybody. But, you didn't really respect pro wrestling when you we're an amateur. Wahoo and I were out imbibing in a few brews one evening and he had to cash a check. I asked him what he got it for and he said for wrestling. I said, "How long? For a month?" He said no. I said, "A week?" He said, "No, for one match." I said, "My gosh." Because you've got to realize, back in the late 50s when you were in college, they told you that if you worked hard and got to where you were making $25,000 a year, you were financially secure and successful. And Wahoo had, it seemed like the check was for $1,500, $1,000, $500, I don't know. But I said, "My gosh, who do I have to kill to get that?" I went to see LeRoy McGuirk but they had junior heavyweights and they didn't want me. They had me work out with Sputnik Monroe, who was a great old hand. The old tradition was they stretched you first. I don't think Sputnik could stretch anybody, but he sure couldn't stretch me. I guzzled him pretty good. The next day they had a work out set up with everybody there and none of them decided that they could handle the situation. So they just told me that they just didn't have anything for me. So Wahoo helped me get started, he sent me up to a guy named Bawk Eskison in Indianapolis. When I got there, Wahoo was getting ready to go back and go play pro ball again. Bawk Eskison wasn't really paying much attention to business, of course I didn't realize that then. Jim Barnette owned it and he wouldn't use me. There was a professional football league there, Continental Football League, and a friend of mine was the defensive line coach and he asked me to stay there and play ball. I did, and Dale Louis started wrestling there. Dale talked to Bawk Eskison again and so finally I broke into wrestling and had my first match in Portsmouth, Ohio in 1962. Bill Miller was a big help to me, as were Mark Starr, George & Sandy Scott, The Von Brauners, Karl Gotch, Art Nelson and people like that. As a matter of fact, it was Art Nelson who called me and said, "Take your bag when you go down to Portsmouth tonight and ride down with Dale because I'm not going to show up. He'll have to

use you." Stan Nelson, his partner, called me five minutes later with the same story, so I rode down, and that's how I got my first match. My second match was with Joe Blanchard and my third match was with Don Leo Jonathan. What a phenomenal athlete Don Leo was, it was just mind-boggling. He was 6'8", 308, he could do nip-ups. I mean, unbelievable balance. A natural athlete. That was my third match and I had met Barnette, he had come back to a big show in Indianapolis, and I was hoping he would discover me. But I think that's when he was in the middle of the most torrid part of his affair with Rockettes, so I don't think he had wrestling on the mind! And that's where I saw Dick the Bruiser wrestle. I had about ten matches and then I came home on the Christmas holiday and got into an altercation in a bar where several guys jumped on me and broke my fist. So, LeRoy made me a special referee with a cast on. I created so much excitement as a special referee that when my cast came off, a couple of his guys that were top-half said everything was stale there then. They said, "Man, book him against us." We started drawing a lot of money which created a lot of jealousy among the junior heavyweights. So LeRoy said, "Man, you're out-drawing my junior heavyweights, you've got to get out of here." He sent me to Texas for Morris Seigel. The first night in I won the Texas Championship. That's a whole another story, it really wasn't supposed to be that way, but that's what happened. I stayed there for a while. After that, I went up to play ball. Verne Gagne called me and Norm Van Brocklin wanted me to come play with the Minnesota Vikings. I went up and worked out with the Vikings. I met Verne, met The Crusher, met Larry Hennig. They wanted me to stay up there and be on the taxi squad, work out and get my timing and everything back. I said, "Fine, as long as you'll let me wrestle professionally." Jim Finks was the general manager at that time and he never let anybody from the Vikings wrestle. I told them, "I'm sorry, but I can make a hell of a lot more money wrestling than playing football." You've got to remember, back then a lineman made $8,000-$12,000 a year. So, I came home. From there, I think Lou Thesz took me to the west coast for a deal with Strongbow. Then I went to Vancouver, British Columbia for a few weeks. I was there when they shot John F. Kennedy. I started drawing money there against Kiniski and Jonathan, but I was getting paid real badly. Rob Fenton was the promoter and I jumped him about it, and he said, "Kid, as green as you are, you're lucky to get to be on the card." I said, "You're paying four or five guys more than I. And when I got here, there was nobody in the building, now that I'm here, we're drawing money. If you're going to screw me, I'm not going to stay." So, I went home. LeRoy booked me and then I did some stuff for Dory Funk Sr. where I was driving from Springfield, Missouri on a Wednesday night all the way to Amarillo, Texas. I worked a "mark out of the crowd" deal where I was razzing all the guys on the card, and none of them knew who I was. I had them all pissed off- Fritz Von Erich, Killer Karl Cox, Mike DiBiase- Ted DiBiase's dad. Dory wanted me to jump in the ring on a certain deal and I said, "Are you going to tell anybody?" Dory said, "No, we want to really make it realistic." I said, "Well I've got news for you, if any of them come at me, I'm going to knock them out." So that's what I did. Then they all came running out of the dressing room, they thought I had jumped in on DiBiase. Killer Karl Cox realized that that wasn't it and gave me the old Hi sign. So that's how that started. I met Wild Red Berry by accident, it seemed like he was home, Pittsburgh, Kansas, for the Christmas holiday. They brought him over to Joplin, Missouri and teamed him with me for a holiday show, and we had a little situation happen. The promoter was so damn dumb he wouldn't even have wrestling put on TV there, all he did was have a live interview on the Saturday night news. We were doing an interview and we got all excited, and it sold out. Well, Red Berry got so excited about it that he went back and told Vince McMahon Sr. about it. I was wrestling the next Thursday in Wichita Falls, Texas on a 4-H farm that didn't even have a telephone. All of a sudden, the police came and got me for an emergency call. I thought something had happened to my parents or something. Well, it was New York (WWWF) calling, their offices were in Washington, DC. Of course I was so naive, I said, "I don't know if I can come up there or not, you'll have to ask Mr. McGuirk, that's who I'm working for." They said, "We'll take care of Mr. McGuirk." They called LeRoy and he realized that it was a big opportunity for me, but I didn't know anything back then. I went to Washington, DC and got over real big in New York. I decided that Sammartino was making all the money, instead of being his partner I'd rather be against him. I turned against him. We sold out Madison Square Garden, it was the largest crowd that was ever in the old Garden for any event in its history. And of course, the reason for that, because we sold out more often than that, is because the fire marshal wasn't there that night and they filled the building. But, it did make the paper that it was the largest crowd there ever. I think it sold out at like 3 o'clock in the afternoon. They ran the Garden every three weeks back then and there was only one main event. I had quite a run there. We sold out the old arena in Washington, DC four times with Bobo Brazil, who was a big star, and usually you only get to wrestle them one time. The match that established me in New York was going to a twenty minute broadway with Killer Kowalski in Washington, DC. It was so good that Vince Sr. was standing there and was just amazed by it. Killer Kowalski was a great performer at that time, he had become a vegetarian so he was not near as big as he used to be, but he had great endurance. There, the great ones there were Bruno Sammartino- who to me is one of the quality guys that's ever been in this business, Gene Kiniski, Waldo Von Erich, Dr. Bill Miller, Jerry Graham- by then he pretty much lost control of himself with his alcohol, Don McClarity, Pedro Morales, Gorilla Monsoon- he and I were the tag champions at one time there. So I already had ideas and I'd get to the people who'd influence the decision makers about my ideas. Although I didn't realize that I had this ability, it was just me trying to make a living. I had a two year run there and then I went to California for Roy Shires, and I was going to work there a few weeks and then go to Japan. But I won the North American title there. The next week, he flipped out. Roy was the kind of promoter, he was a genius, but he never told you anything, you had no idea of what to expect. I got along with him real well, I just didn't understand him. We eventually became great friends and had a lot of respect for each other. I had been staying with him for about a year and a half and I was only wrestling about three nights a week, and everything was real close. I got to wrestle guys like Ray Stevens and Pat Patterson, they were probably the best team in the world at that time. Dominic DeNucci was out there, Joe Scarpa- Jay Strongbow- he was my partner for a while, Jim Haiti was my partner for a while. Then I got into a multi-level business and quit wrestling for a while. I always had wondered if I could make money if something happened to me in wrestling. Athletes have always got to figure if they get an injury or something, so I built a good multi-level business. I found out that I could be successful with another business. Then in 1968 I went to Verne and stayed there until 1970. Up there, The Crusher was one of the all-time greats. Dick Beyer was up there as Dr. X, he was great. Larry Hennig and Harley Race was the best team in that era. Jack Lanza, Bobby Heenan, Billy Red Lyons, Red Bastien, it was a great crew. Of course, Verne Gagne was ahead of his time and he had a real feel for the business and he believed in the athletic type of it. LeRoy McGuirk and I stayed in touch by phone and he was having a lot of trouble by then. He asked me to come home to run his business for him. He still wasn't sure of me as a young guy so he made a partnership arrangement with Fritz Von Erich, Verne Gagne, myself, and gave Danny Hodge a small piece for Danny's long time loyalty to him. So, that's how I started a promotion in 1970. When I started in 1962, I'll never forget Art Nelson said, "Kid, you've got a college education, you're a smart kid, get out of this business and go home, the business is in terrible shape, you can't make over $25,000 a year." They key word to me was $25,000 a year, I'd been taught in college if you made $25,000 a year, you were rich. So I stayed in the business. The business was just starting to explode right around '70, it really started to get big. Verne's area got hot, Chicago, Winnepeg. So here I came back to Oklahoma and it was the shits. It was horrible. They had over-the-hill guys, never-was-beens, and LeRoy being blind, I had the stooge system there where he'd keep everybody fighting each other. That would keep him in power so to speak. I was his partner and had to put up with all his stooges. It took me a while to deal with it but I learned a tremendous amount from LeRoy. It was very frustrating. LeRoy was a great man in his day. And by that time, he drank pretty heavy and it

started to effect him and he just had a lot of psychological problems. But I still learned a hell of a lot under him. In 1973, Eddie Graham asked me to come to Atlanta. There was a trade between two stock holders, Lester Welch and Buddy Fuller. Lester had stock in Florida and Lenny had stock in Georgia, Buddy went to Florida and Lester came to Georgia. Ray Gunkel was alive then and decided that he didn't want to go for it so he was going to break away and form an opposition. The partnership was Ray Gunkel, Paul Jones, and Buddy Fuller. He was going to go against Paul and Buddy's tradee, Lester. So they took all the boys, only one guy didn't go, that guy was Bob Armstrong. When I got there, a bunch of us came in and put a show on with Paul in the old city auditorium. It was amazing, it had Jack Brisco, Dory Funk Jr., Hiro Matsuda, Fritz Von Erich, but nobody in Atlanta knew them. Back in the regionalized days, they didn't get the nation wide exposure. It was like, the crowd was in a vacuum and would just sit there and watch. I went out and they put me against Bob Armstrong. Because they knew Bob, we had a hell of a match and it got a good crowd reaction. Eddie Graham was getting interested in my career and asked me to come down and run it, although Lester was the general partner and Paul was the promoter, he knew they had to have someone strong to run it in booking. Eddie gave me some stock, he also gave Jack Brisco and Buddy Colt some stock. He gave them small pieces and gave me 10% of the ownership. I started running that and we did very, very well. The whole time, Anne Gunkel was setting up an anti-trust suit which we were all very naive about. We didn't know what the hell anti-trust was. Ray wrestled in Savannah, Georgia, had a heart attack and died. Anne, her booker was Tom Renesto- he and Jody Hamilton were the Assasins- and they went on with Ray's plans. We were competitive and did very, very well. Jim Barnette wanted to come back from Australia and Eddie brought Jim in, and Jim bought Lester Welsh out. Jim came in and things were more stable. And we had Jerry Jarrett come in as booker. And I went to Florida in 1974, Eddie gave me ownership to come down there and book it. It was the hardest I ever worked in my life but it was the most rewarding. It was the largest bottom-line profit for the stockholders ever in the history of Florida. Eddie Graham was a genius, he had a lot of devils he fought- but we all do- but that period of time he was just such a supportive man and he stimulated my thought process and I learned so much. He used to say, "Why are you a college guy, come down here and work for me. I didn't even get to junior high." And I said, "I came to get my Ph.d." We used to laugh about it. Of course, that's where I made Dusty Rhodes the "American Dream" in 1974. We had Pak Song, we had Gary Hart- he was at his height, Buddy Colte, Mike Graham was a young babyface, Bobby Duncum, we brought in Dick Murdoch, Terry Funk, and we just literally tore Florida wide open. We really had it hot. And then I went home in 1975 and LeRoy and I bought Verne and Fritz out. We were partners until 1979. LeRoy was impossible, so we split up. In 1979, I formed Mid South and I took Louisiana and Mississippi, and he took Oklahoma and whatever else we had- it was only part of Missouri and part of Texas. And then after a couple years, I came back up here and bought LeRoy out of the old company. In Louisiana, the largest they'd ever done back around 1970 was $400,000 gross. And I took it to over two million dollars a year in a fairly small state. It was real successful and everything was going great. Vince decided on his new game plan, which basically I did the same thing. I tried to convince a huge New York Stock Exchange firm called Kenny National Services to do a very similar operation, but Vince was in the media areas, he had New York already, California was on its ass because the promoter really didn't do a very good job for many, many years. So Vince all of a sudden had that and he had a million dollar warchest. I totally disagree with him philosophically about wrestling, but without a doubt, he's one of the smartest in marketing and he knows how to position himself and his talent better than anybody in the business. He just took the thing to a completely different deal. I think he's hurt himself because in his rise to power, which is very intoxicating, he crushed a lot of people. I think he killed off the independents. And to me, the independents were very important. I tried to tell him, "Leave everybody there, by golly." Then you've got a changeover in talent when you want. Give them a bone when you come into their area and co-promote it with them. You can still take all the damn money and you've got the big nationwide operation." It would have been much healthier to keep everybody going, but he didn't see it that way. Naturally, he was in a position to dictate so he changed the very fiber of this business. As I said, he's a genius. Hitler was too, he destroyed Germany. So, the only guy that can stop Vince is Vince. And he's been doing that pretty good for the last couple of years. And the only person that can compete with him is Turner Broadcasting. But unfortunately, they haven't got a clue as to what the hell they're doing. And so they're no threat. And with their tremendous assets and their position in the media with their broadcast, they should just dictate wrestling worldwide. But they shoot themselves in the foot. They keep wanting to reduce wrestling to a business that's like producing widgets. They don't think it's unique. They think if they keep putting corporate people in charge that don't know what the hell they are doing. And they want to reduce it to their corporate understanding- it's got to walk like a corporation, talk like a corporation, and dress like a corporation. It will never work. So when they have no leadership like that... I mean, when I got there in May, they said, "Be sure to hold the losses this year below $1.8 million. That was the big buy word. Bill Shaw said, "We can't lose over a million eight because that's what I promised the board." We lost $421,000. Quite a difference from that to $1.8 million. I said, "Td like a letter of commendation to everybody in WCW for the fine job we've done." Well hell, they wouldn't write it because that would have acknowledged what a fabulous job had been done. Irregardless of what everybody said, we'd come in and cut some costs and we'd done some things. They were scared to death they were going to lose over $1.8 million and that's still even with a bunch of funny bookeeping that's not exactly kosher as far as showing a true operational picture. They were projecting a net operating loss in 1993 of $6 million. I turned in a budget that was going to make a quarter of a million dollars profit. But they want to sand bag it and they slowly, just slowly encroach upon everything you're doing. You have to justify why you're there or why you do something a certain way everyday, and they don't understand it anyway. So Vince is the only one that can stop himself. One thing that's so key for Vince is that Vince is in the wrestling business and he understands the wrestling business. His problems are pretty easy to identify. Without a doubt, he understands marketing, he understands positioning, and he understands the wrestling business, so he's the only one that can stop himself.

Clark: What are a few of your greatest experiences during your life?

Watts: The birth of my children and to live viecariously in them. Oh, there's a lot of big experiences. The ones I think I relate to business wise was naturally to at such a young age go to New York City and be successful, to sell out the Garden like that. I think we sold it out like three or four times. Also to sell out the Cow Palace in San Francisco, the HIC in Honolulu. You start building a confidence that you knew what you were doing. Verne Gagne, we were both babyfaces, decided to book us against each other in Minneapolis at the big building there and it drew a huge gate. I thought it wouldn't draw with two babyface wrestlers against each other. There's been so many exciting times. One of the most exciting times for me was when Dusty Rhodes truly started believing he was the "American Dream." I'll never forget it. It was at an interview session at the Sportatorium in Tampa, Florida. He cut an interview where I knew he was where I was trying to get him to be. Goose-bumps broke out on my arm, just went right down my arm. I knew I had created a superstar. But he had all of it, it was just a point of guiding him and encouraging him and conjoling him. When I went to WCW, they wanted me to fire Dusty. I said, "Well wait a minute, I want to see where his head's at, he's one of the most creative men in the business. All he needs is some guidance to force him to follow through and to have some continuity. And we were getting all those systems in place because Dusty's a fabulous guy. He loves the business and he's very creative. But when you're under the gun like that, sometimes it gets so big and there was so much television. Gosh, if you had seen what we produced in October, November and December in television, pay-per-views, Clashes and extra television hours, it's mind-boggling. The staff that writes *Roseanne* and all the top NBC shows couldn't do

that, and we produced all that stuff. It's stupid, it is so stupid. In one of my first two weeks there, I presented a game plan to succeed for WCW, and they rejected it because they were afraid to go that strong. To me it was simple, you took WCW and you put it head up with WWF, make it run aside. You run our Clash of the Champions the night they run their pay-per-views and you run our pay-per-views right up against the night they run their big cable deals. To give the people a choice. They were scared to death of that. Everything you'd come up with that would be a winning concept for them, they'd reject it. Do you realize that I made the first black world's heavyweight champion in the history of the business with a major operation. And I know I've heard the guys say Iceman King Parsons was for Dallas. Shit, Dallas was a regional thing just like mine was. There's never been a major worldwide organization like the NWA, WWF, or WCW that's had a black world champion. So I made Ron Simmons the world's champion, he's got all the credentials in the world. And we thought with Turner Broadcasting we ought to be able to get Simmons in Ted Turner's box at the Braves games which is picked up nationwide on TV every time they play a game. Shit, we couldn't do that. Would I be able to get him on the sideline of the Atlanta Falcons? Hell, they've got every country western singer and even a guy named Zeus who played some bit part in a movie, was down there with the Buffalo Bills playing. We couldn't do that. We thought we could get him with the Atlanta Hawks right in the good seats where the crowd would pick him up. We couldn't do that. We figured we could get him on *Larry King Live*, Vince was on there. We couldn't do that. Nothing on CNN. Do you realize TBS just produced a big documentary on the history of Harley Davidsons? They had James Caan, they had the guy that played J.R. Ewing on *Dallas*, all these different stars talking about their Harley experiences. There's nobody that rides Harleys anymore than the wrestlers for WCW. Sting is a big Harley rider, Barry Windham is a big Harley rider, I am too. Not one wrestler in the show. So here you have all this stuff that could be put together to build wrestling and you can't get shit, you can't get any cooperation at all. The head of TBS Sports doesn't particularly care for wrestling, in my opinion. Ric Flair told me a story one time that when he was on the sidelines when Steve Spurior was the coach, because he's a friend of Spurior's, the TBS crew was shooting the game and the crew told him later that when they picked him up on the sidelines, that the head of TBS Sports said, "Don't pick him up, I don't want to show a wrestler on our broadcast." How stupid can you be? We couldn't get shit for Ron Simmons. Bobby Bowden did a nationwide uplink before our pay-per-view to help promote Ron Simmons. He took a day of his holiday and did it. They retired his number at Florida State. Bobby Bowden did everything for Ron Simmons but TBS didn't so shit for him. Here's how stupid they are- you do a three hour pay-per-view, two hours and fifty minutes. When they produced it on cassette they want to cut it down to two hours. I said, "How dumb can you be?" Who would go buy a movie with a third of it gone? See what I mean, they're penny wise and dollar foolish. Vince doesn't do that and he's the best marketer in the world. I said, "You've got to copy Vince's strengths and you've got to ignore his weaknesses." But they wouldn't do it. Did you ever go to the top rental deals in Atlanta? None of WCW's shit is on the shelves, all of Vince's stuff is on the shelves. "It costs more to do a three hour tape. Well, they don't want three hour rentals." Well, they damn sure have all of Vince's three hour rentals. You see what I mean, it was inane. One hand doesn't know what the other one is doing. They've got a director of marketing there, the only thing that was brought to me to try to get me to pass it on the market was a game, with no specified advantage to it except some percentage of something. It was a very nefarious deal and they wanted me to make a wrestler "The Master of the Snapping Hold." What wrestler would want that laid on him? One hand doesn't know what the other one is doing. Who did they shit on when I resigned? Jim Ross, probably the most valuable guy at WCW. A guy, who to me is the best commentator in the business. A guy who during one pay-per-view passed a kidney stone and never left the booth. He busted his ass. He lives, eats, breathes it, contributes to the booking meetings. His 900 line did $500,000 a year, he wrote Missy did about $200,000 a year. And they take him off the air. And he's got a radio show on WSB that's clear-channeled, it reaches forty states or something that, it's the top sports show. Brother I'm telling you, the guy that made that decision, and I know who it is, you do too, but we won't call it, the guy wouldn't have enough brains to piss out of a boot if the directions were written on the heel. But he's a very, very powerful person at Turner Broadcasting, so that's what you get into. It's just like when we met one time with the executives of TBS, they wanted more programming. And I said, "Let's pull some of the old, great matches out. We can't produce anymore with the number of guys we have. We've mixed it so many ways that nobody gives a shit anyway." Hell, when I got there, every star we had had been a star in 1987. That's the same problem Vince has got, it's stale. People are crying for new talent. But it takes time to develop new talent when your system has been shut down. They said, "No, don't do it." I said, "We're going to do it anyway." Ross and I pulled out a series on Ric Flair that rebuilt the NWA title. Because after the Chono-Rude match in Philly, it stunk the joint out. We wanted to rebuild the prestige. We pulled the one where Steamboat beat him and the one where he beat Steamboat and all that. It got such a rating that the TBS guys then said, "We want Ric Flair on every week." Really for me, it was a deal saying, "Hey Ric, we've got a place for you here. We'd like to see you come back." Becausde no matter what anybody says, I think Ric Flair because of his attitude always has the best match on the card. I think Ric Flair has two or three years of great performance left in the ring and then he can be a great broadcaster. That's one of the things that depressed Flair, because everybody else had put matches on there of him getting killed. It caused such a rift with some of our talent that's never drawn any money, and they were mad because we put Flair on. I mean, most of these guys talk about the money they've drawn... I got a kick out of one guy that's one of WCW's stars, "Well, I drew all this money for Vince and he didn't pay me right, so I quit." And I thought, "You did, huh?" When Vince McMahon was drawing money, anybody he put against Hogan drew money, anybody he put on the card drew money. It was his operation that was drawing the money. When a wrestler has never figured a program, an angle, or a finish comes and tells me he draws money, I look at him and think, "Boy, I don't know what shit you're smoking, but it sure is making your head big." It's just like when I got there, they wanted a clean program, so did the public. I instituted the steroid testing on November 11 because if you remember by the Havoc I had two guys that I lost to personal problems. So I wanted drug testing. We tested on November 11. We were supposed to have a drug program. We'd already met with a real good law firm who was drawing a real comprehensive, thorough drug program up. It was supposed to be ready by the test. You probably know of how many guys tested positive on it, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out who was on roids. You also know who refused to take the test. In February, there was still no written program. So then I really raised hell. They got the program written immediately because it was all ready, and we had to do was sign off on it. It was supposed to be in place February 15. Of course, I resigned on the tenth and they've never seen it. For me, if you were positive, we were going to get rid of you. You've either got to have a drug program or not. But see, some people say, "We have a no smoking program at Turner Broadcasting." Of course, that's means, "Just don't smoke in front of me." To me, that's hypocritical. So here's the funny thing, the three things that all the sheets were addressing when I got there were the three things I acted on. The funny thing is, as soon as I'd signed Flair, they started knocking the fact that Flair couldn't even help us. They dropped the roid issue because we started complying, we faced it and we were addressing it. It's still a joke with the WWF. They all say how tough the policy is there, I guarantee it's selective. It seemed like somebody said Paul E. Dangerously said I was anti-Semetic. I wasn't anti-Semetic. I didn't even know he was Jewish when I went there. I've never been anti-Semetic. I believe in God and I read the Bible. I'm profane and I'm a lot of bad things, but I do believe in God and I do believe in the Bible. It says if you curse a Jew that you are cursed of God, so I would never be anti-Semetic because it's against God's word. I'm not anti-Black. I have my opinions about a lot of things. And then there's people that denigrate and dilute and try to scare you into not having an opinion. And all of that stuff, I don't think that the people that make the decisions at Turner Broadcasting ever supported

me philosophically, because they don't understand it. So, they didn't support it. Therefore, I think that I was the guy they were in so many ways told to hire. So they had to discredit me and the only way to do it was to sand bag me. Nobody that I wanted to fire corporately at WCW could I fire. I went on the record right off wanting to remove several people that were anti what we were doing. You couldn't fire them. Well, if you've got people that you want to get out of there and you know they're not doing anything and they know they're not, and they know you don't like them, what does that do? They turn against you. So then, they're crying and knocking you all the time so the guy that's up in the North Tower is listening to them, all my distractors. He said, "Well, you intimidate people." Yeah, I intimidate people when they're not doing their job. He said, "You've got a dressing room mentality." Who do you think I'm working with, rocket scientists? What do you think they're used to? Here you've got a bunch of people that hadn't been doing their job and then collecting all this damn money, and I'm trying to make them go to work. I mean, the mess the syndication is in is so stupid. Why would you pay Turner Programming Services to syndicate your shows, you can't control what they do, and most of them don't like wrestling. And it's not the right image, they'd rather syndicate CNN or *The Wonder Years* or the movie packages or the cartoon network, not wrestling. They think all wrestling is wrestling, they don't even understand the difference and don't care to learn. They get paid $600,000 last year to syndicate our programs and then it goes to $1.2 million this year. And they've lost 30% of our network, we're under-delivering unbelievably. Here's what they say- "The ratings are down and we can't sell it." Shit, the ratings were down before I got there, the difference was, they also lost the key stations because they didn't maintain and service the relationship at the station. So WCW has to have its own syndicator, a very strong person that answers to WCW and that has wrestling as their only interest. It's a twelve million dollar icome stream that's under-delivering. But, they don't want to do that. They want to do it their own way or they go hire some idiot who should never be hired or they go hire somebody that's been fired in the past or something like that. Not the right people. So you see what I mean, they say, "We'll you're running it, but we're going to tell you what you can and can't do, and we really don't like what you're doing. We don't believe in what you're doing." Let me tell you, no matter what Vince was doing promotionally, I would go in a different direction to give the viewing fan an alternative. Otherwise, you're just a copy of him. But certainly, the things he does well marketing wise and positioning wise, we should emulate. But we didn't and they don't. And then they hire a guy to be in charge of television production who has never produced a show in his life, who was a fill-in for another wrestling promotion because their top announcer was hired by the WWF. And this guy sells them a bill of goods on what he's going to do for wrestling. Well, check their ratings since I've gone. Since October we didn't have below a 2.0 on WCW Saturday and it was averaging a 2.6 for eight weeks, and then I think it did a 2.8 and a 2.7 or something like that. Then it did a 3.1 the Saturday after the last pay-per-view because everybody knew Flair would be there. I'm just assuming and I'll guarantee you it's probably fallen since then. Somebody told me the other day they had a production setup at Center Stage with no truck. That's all that finger pointing. We wanted to spend money ever since I went there to improve the graphics packages and change the sets on all the shows. We were told, "No, you've got to cut costs, you can't spend any of this money." Kip Frey spent more money on one set than we wanted to spend on all of them. But then they were going to go hire a television production guy and let him spend the money. And then they said we hadn't had any ideas. We've had all those ideas, everything I did there I documented my opinions on and everything else for whatever it's worth. But, it was ignored. I think that WCW is positioned to fail. I think Ted Turner realizes the value of wrestling, he knows what wrestling has done for his station. It was what made it a superstation, it was the first program that had over 100,000 homes watching it, and he understands it. But he is so insolated and he's so busy with other things and it's so minor to him that he turns it over constantly to people who do not understand it and they're more concerned with how you dress and how you talk than what the hell you're doing.

Clark: Do you think that there's still good money to be earned in pro wrestling now or do you think it is just that bad?

Watts: I knew what the state of the business was and I knew where we had to go, and I figured it would take about three years. First of all, you have got to develop new talent. You had to develop your own farm system to where you could get them experienced, but you had to have new talent. And you had to have a concept of training them. You had to go back to getting some athletes, not just going to the gym and getting some guy and say, "He looks good and he looks like he's probably been on steroids and he's got a big body," and you give him a gimmick and he can't even really do the gimmick, so there's nothing legitimate in the whole thing, sign him to a big contract and start booking him. The New Japan Pro Wrestling was in much the same thing four or five years ago. Their big superstars retired and they started building their young stars. They had a dojo system where they'd make them come in and scrub the floors, do the wash and cook the food. They wanted a guy that wanted to be in wrestling more than anything in the world. They didn't go out and pay guys with overinflated egos to come into wrestling. WCW does the opposite, they go buy you into wrestling. So, a guy that doesn't give a shit about wrestling, can't wrestle, doesn't know anything about it, all he wants is the money. That's the caliber of athletes you get. I think the business has gone so far one way, it needs to go almost 180 degrees the other way. But they say, "Why are you trying to attract a hardcore audience because only four percent of the people in the United States believe wrestling's real anyway?" I said, "That's what you don't understand, I don't give you a shit what they believe." Nobody ever believed it was real. If you talked to ten guys in the front row in the 60s or the 70s or the 80s, and said, "Do you think wrestling is 100% legitimate?" They'd practically all say no. But they'd say those two guys are mad at each other. I think you've got to have some mystery, some drama, some suspense and some unpredictability, and you've got to have some athletic ability. They've been trained since about '87 that it's a cartoon. It's not going to happen overnight that you're going to train people back that there's more to it than just being a cartoon. We could have at least got the company where the bleeding would stop, we were in the process of that. But, it's not going to be easy. The athletes that have been slopping at the trough of overpaid and overegoed are going to fight that. But pretty soon they'll conform or else they would be out of a job. And the attitude was already changing except for a few guys. We had a few test cases. And all you have to do is stand firm. Because let me tell you, if you lost all of them, what difference would it make? You couldn't have drawn any less money or any less ratings. So none of them were indespensable. Sting would have stayed anyway, Sting is probably the least of the problems. He works hard, he's not on steroids, he was your top babyface. Most of the guys that have been in the old days like Ricky Steamboat or Barry Windham, guys like that that understood the ethic, they would have been there. So you lost a few primo madonnas, it didn't make any difference, you needed to lose them. But see, the corporate executives at TBS, they don't understand that. They think you're building a team to win a game like the Braves. Well hell, you're not, you're building box office attractions. So you need change, you don't need the same people year after year. They think they have to have them all. One TBS executive told me, "The reason the Braves had a turnaround was because John Schurholtz went in there and cleaned up the front office. He quit the vulgarity, they had to dress corporately, they even put guys in uniforms selling the concessions in the stands. And oh yeah, he made a few good trades." I like just fell out of my chair. For him to reduce what's happened to the Braves to that analysis, it proves to me he doesn't know what the hell he's talking about. But, he was running our company. If all you had to do was make it look corporate to make it a success, every sports franchise that has a corporate ownership should be successful. Again, we knew where we were going and from day one I went there, the people I work for would go ask other people, "Does Watts know what he's doing? This is a small industry." What kind of confidence did that give me or anybody working for me? So all the detractors said, "Just ignore him, he ain't going to be here long." That's what I fought everyday, it was a very brutal situation, to be under such a microscope just trying to do a job.

Hell, I knew what the hell we were going to do and I knew where it needed to go, and that's still where it needs to go. Until it goes there, there's only one company that's going to make it, and that's Vince McMahon. Because he has to make money, he doesn't have all these other companies to fund his losses. Now then, if you're going to talk about an independent making money, it's going to very, very hard for one simple reason. People in television, people who buy programming, they're followers, they're not leaders. Their perception, because wrestling is in a slump, is that the public has lost interest in wrestling. They don't understand that they've had Hulk Hogan there for ten years, that they've had all these top stars- Randy Savage- all these great stars, that they've had them for five, eight, ten yrears. And I don't care that you're not going to eat chocolate cake every week for ten years, it's stale. It's been mishandled, the whole system has been broken down. Wrestling is in a slump but they perceive the public has lost interest in it. What it is, the industry did not give the paying public what they want to see. Then, they (people in television) have already been spoiled because of the war between Crockett, WCW and WWF. They started paying stations huge amounts of compensation in order to be on the air. So all of a sudden, a station doesn't want to play your wrestling unless you compensate them. An independent can't afford to do that. The next thing is, television programmers, since they don't understand wrestling, they look at wrestling for production value, for graphics, for cameras, for lighting, and that's how they judge it. An independent can't afford to spend that much on production. Let me tell you, WCW doesn't even come close to spending on our production what Vince McMahon does. And yet, we outrated him on cable every week. And we had to produce more with less stars and with less costs. How can an independent do that? At least at Turner Broadcasting you get a special rate on the truck and a lot of inner-company help on that, but an independent can't afford to do that. The third thing is, if you're an independent, as soon as you build a star that could draw you some money, WCW or WWF will pick up the phone and he's gone. That's why I was starting to work back with Jimmy Cornette and I guaranteed him we would not take any of his talent unless he was ready for us to. That's what you have to do to rebuild the independents. You've got to assure them that they're not getting in bed with a tiger that's going to eat them. But that's not corporate mentality, they don't understand. So again, they shoot themselves in the foot. Why is Jerry Jarrett still in business? He doesn't build anybody that's over 6' tall unless they're family. Hell, Vince and WCW doesn't want any of those little guys. So what you have is stagnation, no turnover, no new development, and how's a young promotion going to overcome compensating the stations, glitzy production and keeping the talent? Independents can't do it these days. But, they're going to finish killing it off. It'll come back in some form. It happened once out of Los Angeles, it happened once out of Chicago where they had a similar situation. Never like this, but it will probably survive. But right now it's a very tough, tough thing to do.

Clark: How successful do you see Vince being in the future?

Watts: Vince McMahon's future is up to him, he controls his future. I disagree with them philosophically, he calls his family entertainment and he doesn't even want hardcore wrestling. And I think he's hurt the business because he's taken the mystery out of it. As soon as you tell everybody that it's not real and it becomes public knowledge, most people don't want to see it, they'll take their kids to see it. Let me ask you, if there was a great movie out there, would you want to know the ending of it before you went to it? How many times did somebody start telling you about the movie and I'd say, "Wait a minute, don't tell me, I want to go see it myself."

Clark: Well there seemed to be a great secret to *The Crying Game* and there was a big deal about nobody telling anybody about the plot.

Watts: Right. If I had known what *The Crying Game's* punchline was, I wouldn't have gone. As Barnette says, I'm homophobic. I'm not homophobic, I don't like fags. But I mean, that's my personal opinion. I have a right to that opinion. Fags don't like straights. Otherwise, then why wouldn't they seduce them? But, that's just my personal opinion. But the bottom line is, and I tried to tell the TBS guys about this, in a John Wayne movie, everybody knew he didn't kill the Indians, but they didn't get up and shake hands and ride off in the sunset together. Without having a kay fabe policy, the wrestlers do now. They also didn't tell you the end of the movie before it started, which with Turner Broadcasting and all the leaks in it, you guys know what the hell's going to happen in the arenas or the pay-per-views before it happens. As a matter of fact, how many times I can remember we had some matches run where they had advertised title changes before they happened because somebody else is sticking an ad in that we had no control over. And that's how lose it was up there. That's where Vince, with his difference in philosophy, he shoots himself in the foot. Because no matter, what there's got to be a mystery and an aura of danger. If everybody thought that there would never be a wreck in a car race, do you think they'd still have that many people there? Why the hell would all these people pay and go see over the hill boxers fight each other? Because they still think it's fairly on the up and up and somebody might get knocked out. Shit, the fans turned my cab over when I wrestled at Forbes Field and it took forty policemen to get me to the ring to wrestle Bobo Brazil in Washington, DC. You used to have to fight for your life. None of the modern day heels have ever been in a riot because the fans don't believe anything they're doing anyway. The closest we had to it was Vader. But I mean to tell you, these guys don't know what the hell a riot is. One thing Sting said to me, it was so funny, "Well Bill, you know how the business has changed." I said, "You're right Sting, we used to have to draw money." With WCW, you don't have to draw money because you have everything guaranteed. At least Vince still makes them draw money to get the money. At least Vince knows how to promote. Again, the only thing philosophically he and I disagree on is that his perverted- to me it's perverted because it's not what I believe in- concept of how to present wrestling where it's all a farce. But brother, he's such a strong marketer and he makes so many incilary ideas that feed his company that he still makes a hell of a lot of money. But he was more vulnerable this past year than he's ever been. I don't think Hogan can save it for him for two reasons. No matter what, Hogan's about sixty pounds or so smaller from what I understand. Number two, he's lost a lot of his credibility with the fans in that he was a part of the lie. Number three, I don't think he would ever dedicate himself with the intensity he had when he was becoming a star. He also was at a megatrend in time where he became bigger than the business. He was the first wrestler that became a big movie star and he was the first wrestler on all those big talk shows and all the big media things. He became bigger than the business. That's one thing Vince did extremely well. And shit, TBS wanted to go out and have a contest to find the next Hulk Hogan. I mean, what the hell are you going to do with all those idiots? That's how little they understand. "Well, let's just go copy that." Dusty was told one time he had two or three days to come up with seven new wrestlers and they all had to have a name because they had seven new dolls to sell. They marched in and had seven new guys outfitted. None of them could do a thing and never drew a quarter. But that was their concept. I guarantee you before it's over, TBS and WCW will hire Hollywood script writers to start writing the storylines for wrestling. So then how much suspense are you going to have, how much mystery are you going to have? They'll have that writer on the talk show, he's the one that will get on the talk show, and he'll be telling what's going to happen for the next three months. So you don't even need to watch, he's already told you what's going to happen. Vince McMahon has really shot himself in the foot. But I think he realizes it and I think he's trying to do some things. Hell, at least he's paying the bills, he doesn't have to lay it off on anybody else. He either makes it or breaks it on his ability. He understands wrestling and he damn sure understands marketing.

Clark: Are you sad to see what the sport has become or do you still even consider it a sport?

Watts: I'm sad to see what it's become and I'm ashamed to be in it, with the people's concept of what it is today. Again, I think that the

camaraderie is gone, I think there's so many things that were in it that made it a great, great sport. It's all gone. With WCW, your position on the card was determined by your contract. If you had $8 million in contracts, how could you get a new star and fit him into that? If you've got a guy guaranteed to a half a million dollars a year whether he draws five cents or doesn't, he's going to be booked and he's going to be booked in the top matches. You're not going to have him in the openers doing jobs for half a million a year. Where's your incentive?

Clark: Do you feel that an organization in today's age can survive and make money with the main focus of their product being athletics?

Watts: The NWA back when they were focused towards the athletic aspect, they were doing good. I don't mean totally because wrestling has always had its show biz in it. They were beating Vince in Philly, in Baltimore, everywhere they ran with him. He came in with Roddy Piper and Hulk Hogan and everybody against me in Oklahoma City and I beat his ass. Beat his ass. He couldn't draw a dime anywhere I was running against him. I'm not trying to say that it can succeed just with athleticism, I think you've got to have it all. But you've got to have the element of danger and you've got to have the mystery. And there is no mystery and there is no danger in today's wrestling. The only danger is, is one of these clumsy sonofabitches who don't give a shit, breaking somebody's back, breaks a job guy's shoulder. That's the only mystery. There sure isn't any mystery about the outcome of the matches. There sure isn't mystery about much of anything.

WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

The Lightning Kid (Sean Waltman) is scheduled to debut for Titan at Monday Night Raw in New York on 4/26 and then will embark on a tour of Japan in about a month. The WWF has offered him a two year deal which they will probably discuss on 4/26. He had a tryout with them at the TV tapings in Arizona on 4/5, 4/6 against Louie Spicollie.

WWF is returning to Europe with a tour in July and there is talk either Survivor Series or Royal Rumble will be held over there. . . With Sean Mooney leaving the WWF, Boni Blackstone may be coming in to either do Event Centers (which Gene Okerlund is doing temporarily) or maybe even live interviews. She is meeting with Titan this week. . . Programs at house shows for May and June include Bret Hart vs Lex Luger, Jim Duggan (Hulk Hogan on the weekends starting after the King of the Ring PPV) vs Yokozuna, Bam Bam Bigelow vs Tatanka, Mr. Perfect vs Shawn Michaels, Steiners vs Money Inc, Undertaker vs Giant Gonzales, Crush vs one of the Doinks, and Nasty Boys vs Head Shrinkers. . . The King of the Ring PPV from Dayton, OH on 6/13 will feature Hulk Hogan vs Yokozuna and most likely a Money Inc. vs Steiners match as well as an eight man single elimination tournament. The participants in that tourney will be decided by the qualifying matches being held on TV during the May sweeps.

WWF at the Arena in Sheffield, England on 4/11 with a show that aired live on TV: Fatu beat Brian Knobbs. Doink the Clown beat Kamala. Mr. Perfect beat Samu. Bob Backlund beat Damian Demento. Typhoon beat Brooklyn Brawler. Crush beat Shawn Michaels by countout. Lex Luger beat Jim Duggan by DQ when Perfect interfered. Jim Duggan beat Yokozuna in a dark match. -By Dave Wright

WWF in Glasgow, Scotland on 4/18 with about 5,500: Virgil beat Terry Taylor. Tatanka beat Papa Shango. Steiners beat Money Inc by DQ. Doink the Clown (Steve Keirn) beat Tito Santana. Bushwhackers beat Beverly Brothers. Undertaker beat Giant Gonzales by DQ. Bret Hart beat Bam Bam Bigelow. -By Dave Wright

WWF in Dublin, Ireland on 4/21 with about 4,000: Typhoon beat Demento. Kamala beat Kimchee. Doink (Matt Borne) beat Crush via countout. Yokozuna beat Duggan. Michaels beat Backlund. Nasty Boys vs Head Shrinkers -double-DQ. Perfect beat Luger. -By Dave Wright

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING

The Slamboree '93 PPV emanates from the Omni in Atlanta, GA on 5/23 with The British Bulldog Davey Boy Smith vs Big Van Vader for the WCW title, Arn Anderson vs Barry Windham for the NWA title, Rick Steamboat & Shane Douglas vs Brian Pillman & Steve Austin for the WCW/NWA tag team titles, Sting vs Scott Norton, Kensuke Sasaki & Dustin Rhodes vs Rick Rude & Paul Orndorff, Too Cold Scorpio & Marcus Bagwell vs Chris Benoit & Bobby Eaton, and Van Hammer vs Maxx Payne. The card is also scheduled to feature three matches with some "names of the past" with Dory Funk Jr. vs Nick Bockwinkel, Ole Anderson & Blackjack Mulligan vs Dusty Rhodes & Wahoo McDaniel, as well as a six man tag team match. WCW announced there would be at least 40 legends at the weekend's festivities that include a dinner the night before and a gathering on Sunday afternoon.

The second Cactus Jack-Big Van Vader match was taped on 4/21 at Center Stage and aired on the 4/24 WCW Saturday Night. The ending of the match saw Vader powerbomb Cactus on the concrete floor after Harley Race removed the padding that surrounds the ring. After they ended the match, the fans in the building were told that they would not be able to leave. Cactus laid out on the floor for over forty minutes before the paramedics could carefully put him on the stretcher. All the agents and some babyface wrestlers stood around the medical crew while they tended to Jack. It's unclear how much of this was part of the planned angle, but Cactus Jack suffered some legitimate injuries. He suffered a concussion and didn't have feeling in his hands and left leg. He was going in and out of consciousness as the paramedics were trying to load him onto the stretcher, which is one of the reasons it took as long as it did. He is going to be out of action for an indefinite period of time, currently projected at a couple of months.

Jim Neidhart (coming in as a face) and The Blackhearts debuted on 4/20 at the TV tapings in Montgomery, AL. . . Charlie Norris received a tryout at Center Stage on 4/21 working as Thunderblood. J.W. Storm also got a tryout that night. . . Marty Jannetty has been talking to both WCW and the WWF. . . Tully Blanchard is set to debut at Slamboree on a Flair for the Gold segement and will most likely start working house shows in June teaming up with Arn Anderson. . . Sid Vicious is just about set to come in and very well could make an appearance at Slamboree but will definitely wrestle on the 7/11 Beach Blast PPV and be in by June. . . There was a posting in the office of Turner Broadcasting of positions needed. For one of the positions, they are looking for scriptwriters for WCW. The posting also says something to the effect of- knowledge of professional wrestling business is preffered.

WCW at the Community Center in Springfield, TN on 4/22 with about 150, at the high school in Mount Juliet, TN on 4/23 with about 100, at the Christian County High School in Hopkinsville, TN on 4/24 with about 300 (results same for all three nights of B shows): Barbarian beat Robby V. Steve Regal wrestled Shanghai Pierce to a ten minute draw. Chris Benoit & Bobby Eaton beat Tom Zenk & Johnny Gunn as Benoit pinned Gunn after Benoit dropped Gunn on the ropes and Eaton came off the rope with a double ax handle. Van Hammer beat Vinnie Vegas. Johnny B. Badd beat Tex Slashinger. Steve Austin & Brian Pillman beat Too Cold Scorpio & Marcus Bagwell. -By Kim Fisher

WCW at the Civic Center in Lakeland, FL on 4/23 with about 2,100: Cole Brothers beat The Wrecking Crew. Maxx Payne beat Dick Slater. Arn Anderson beat Erik Watts. Ric Flair came out and spoke for several minutes in the ring. Rick Rude beat Brad Armstrong. Dustin Rhodes beat Paul Orndorff. Barry Windham beat Ricky Steamboat. Sting beat Big Van Vader by DQ as he pulled the referee in front of him as Sting was going for the splash in the corner. -By Paul Spiegel

THE INDEPENDENT SCENE

Dennis Coralluzzo, Eddie Sharkey and Lightning Kid promoted a big indie show under the NWA banner on 4/17 in Minneapolis, MN as about 734 fans attended to witness two matches that were declared by readers as possible match of the year candidates; Terry Funk battled Road Warrior Hawk to a double-DQ and Sabu wrestled Lightning Kid to a no-contest. In the Funk-Hawk brawl, the bell had actually rung after less than a minute of action and they battled all over the building for about 16 miuntes after the match had officially ended. It was described as a great brawl with many brutal moments in the match,

including when Hawk bashed a trash can over Funk's head six times, caving one side of it in. Oliver Humperdink was in Sabu's corner as he wrestled Lightning Kid, who bled from his forehead during their match which included many tremendous highspots in the close to nineteen minutes they worked. In other matches, Nailz & Charlie Norris beat Mr Saito & The Hater, Chris Candito beat Jerry Lynn, Larry Cameron beat Tommy Ferrara, Brad Rheingans beat The Tazmaniac, and Billy Blaze beat Horace the Psychopath.

ECW has television tapings for Sports Channel on 5/14 and 5/15 at the ECW Arena in South Philadelphia with booker Eddie Gilbert, Terry Funk, Magnificent Muroco, Jimmy Snuka, Paul E. Dangerously, Ivan and Vladimir Koloff (5/15), Road Warrior Hawk (5/14), Sandman, Johnny Hotbody, Chris Candito. For info call (215)544-0421.

ECWA is running a show on 5/1 at the Salesianum High School in Wilmington, DE featuring steel cages with Lance Diamond vs Cheetah Master and Blue Thunder vs Superstar and special appearances by Ivan Koloff and Captain Lou Albano. For info call (302)999-9662.

Jim Hudson announced on John Arezzi's Pro Wrestling Spotlight radio show on 4/24 that he would be holding television tapings in June in Austin, Texas that would be broadcast overseas on High Definition TV. Paul E. Dangerously accompanied Hudson on the show and said that he would put all his energies into this promotion when it starts up. Hudson also said that Jim Crockett, who isn't able to promote anything involving wrestling until his no-compete clause expires in November, is a good friend of his and will be welcome to join the promotion. Hint.

Bruno Sammartino will be starring in the 4/27 episode of *Tribeca* on FOX with Robert DeNiro. . . One Man Gang, Akeem (George Gray) is now working as a baggage man at an airport in Baton Rouge, LA.

Dennis Wipprecht has an afternoon show on 5/15 using the NWA name in Steeltown, MD with Gilbert vs Jerry Lawler. . . Tony Rumble has a show on 5/1 in Ogdensburg, NY with Rick Martel, Tony Atlas, Bushwhackers, Vic Steamboat. . . Tommy Dee has a show in Rome, NY on 5/1 with Jake Roberts, Hercules, Ax. . . Wendell Weatherbe has a show on 5/15 in Westbrook, ME with Hawk vs Earthquake. . . Greg Valentine and Tazmaniac are appearing on a show on 5/7 at the Long Island University in Southampton, NY. . . Tony Wightman has a show on 5/22 in Langhorne, PA at Neshaminy High School with Warlord vs Atlas and Misty Blue vs Linda Dallas in cage matches and Cheetah Kid vs Black Scorpion. . . The WAW out of Florida is running TV tapings in England with shows in London on 5/18 and 5/19, Sheffield on 5/22 and 5/23, Birmingham on 6/26 and 6/27.

FLYER FAN FARE

The Cookson Wrestling Connection is $2 for the first minute and 99 cents for each additional minute at 1-900-446-1064. . . Wade Keller publishes the *Pro Wrestling Torch Weekly* newsletter at $6 for 4 issues and features fresh news, rotating columnists, interviews, match reports, and much more at PO Box 201844, Minneapolis, MN 55420. . . Paul Adamovic published an 80 page yearbook for his *Weekly World Examiner* newsletter with year end awards, articles and interviews with Eddie Gilbert and Bill Watts. It goes for $10 at PO Box 303, Irvington, NY 10533.

FLYER NEWSLETTER BACK ISSUES- INTERVIEWS WITH: #4: Jerry Lawler, #5: Paul Roma & Johnny B. Badd, #6: Iron Sheik & Jimmy Snuka, #7: Bruno Sammartino, #8: Kerry Von Erich, #9: Sammartino, #10: Terry Taylor, #11: Hawk & Taylor, #12: Marty Jannetty, #13: Jannetty, #14: Animal, #15: Buddy Landel, #16: Davey Boy Smith & Paul Ellering, #17: Jake Roberts, #18: Roberts & Bill Watts, #19: Various, #20: Madusa, #21: Madusa, #22: Paul E. Dangerously, #23: Earthquake, #24: Honky Tonk Man, #25: Max Moon. Each back issue is $2 ($3 outside of U.S.) (no color photo) and can be ordered by sending the payment to the Flyer addres

In an effort to improve the quality of this newsletter, we would appreciate it if you could please phone in a report of any live shows you attend after the event is held to our phoneline (215)566-3852 at any and all hours of the day. THANK YOU.

All interviews are transcribed verbatim and the opinions of the subject being interviewed do not necassarily reflect the opinons of the editor or this newsletter.

The Wrestling Flyer Newsletter is a biweekly publication available by subscription at $1.50 ($2.50 for orders outside of North America) per issue, $6 for 4 issues, $12 for 8 issues, $18 for 12 issues, etc. This newsletter with topical and fascinating interviews, fresh inside news, articles, results, and a great color photo, will be sent via first-class mail to you every other week. Send all subscription orders, merchandise orders, letters, news, articles, and all other inquiries to: THE WRESTLING FLYER NEWSLETTER, PO BOX 283, WALLINGFORD, PA 19086. Please make all payments (cash, checks, money orders) payable to the editor, John Clark. THANK YOU.

COLOR PHOTO: ARN ANDERSON

TENTATIVE — JUNE 1993 WWF EVENT SCHEDULE — TENTATIVE

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
	1 PENSACOLA FL SIOUX FALLS SD	2 DOTHAN AL SIOUX CITY IA	3 COLUMBUS GA DES MOINES IA	4 MONTGOMERY AL WINNEPEG MB	5 MOBILE AL MINNEAPOLIS MN	6 ORLANDO FL ALBANY NY
7 MANHATTAN CENTER*	8	9	10	11 RICHMOND VA BALTIMORE MD	12 INDIANAPOLIS IN MADISON SQ GARDEN	13 DAYTON OH#
14 COLUMBUS OH*	15 HUNTINGTON WV*	16 ROCKFORD IL CANTON OH	17 CEDAR RAPIDS IA WHEELING WV	18 HUNTSVILLE AL MOLINE IL	19 NASHVILLE TN ST LOUIS MO	20 FT WAYNE IN LOUISVILLE KY
21 POUGHKEEPSIE NY*	22	23	24	25 ROSEMONT IL SACRAMENTO CA	26 BOSTON MA OAKLAND CA	27 UNIONDALE NY SAN BERNADINO CA
28 NEW HAVEN CT ANAHEIM CA	29 WHITE PLAINS NY DENVER CO	30 ALLENTOWN PA EL PASO TX	* NOTES A TELEVISION TAPING # NOTES A PAY-PER-VIEW EVENT			